

NBA Finals: Thunder vs. Pacers

Thursday, June 5, 2025

Indiana Pacers

Rick Carlisle

Game 1: Pregame

RICK CARLISLE: Before we start, you know, when you get into this business, whether you're in coaching, whether you're a player, certainly media people have experienced scrutiny, broadcasting. It's a dynamic business. You're subject to things from unnamed sources. It's just part of it.

So I saw the things that were leaked yesterday about Doris Burke. I just want to say a couple of things.

She has changed the game for women in broadcasting. I have a daughter who just turned 21, who is in her second year at UVA. She's not in the basketball industry. But Doris is a great example of courage and putting herself out there.

It was just so sad to see these reports leaked, really unnecessarily before such a celebrated event.

Doris is a friend. I've asked her many times, why don't you get into coaching? She has such great knowledge.

There are many women who she's paved the way for. I'll name a few of them. Sarah Kustok in Brooklyn who does a great job, Lisa Byington in Milwaukee, Kate Scott in Philadelphia, Monica McNutt New York Knicks. Katy Wenge from Denver, Zora Stephenson in Portland, Ann Meyers Drysdale in Phoenix, and Marney Gellner does some play-by-play for games with Minnesota.

I don't know what's going to happen with all that stuff. But I just want to say thank you to Doris for the example that she has put forth for young women like my daughter and all these people who are changing the game.

She has changed the game. That's the reason that she was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame a couple of years ago. I just want to say that in support of her.

We're looking forward to a great Finals. We know we're a pretty heavy underdog here. But you got to love a challenge like that.



Q. Coach, wanted to ask, how does Siakam's experience here help your team? Also wanted your thoughts on his whole incredible journey from Africa to the NBA.

RICK CARLISLE: He's a very special player, very special young man. Still very young. He's so versatile as a player, and his experience is so diverse, everything he's had to go through to get to moments like this. To become one of Toronto's top players in 2019, he had to go through a few years in the G League, had to earn his way onto the roster full-time.

As we got into last year, there were a couple of younger players who I brought in to talk to him about his journey, so that they could understand that sometimes these things take time.

Beyond that, he's a great player. His leadership is understated, but it's very poignant, it's very timely. His voice is not loud, but it is very meaningful.

So he's been so great for us.

Q. Talking about another woman in basketball, you've obviously hired Jenny Boucek for your staff. You've empowered her with everything she does for your defense and your staff. What made you believe in her and give her the power that she has for you guys? What has she done for your team?

RICK CARLISLE: Well, she's proven herself. She's been a coach for over 20 years. She started off with Ron Rothstein I think down in Miami with the Sol. She became a first-time head coach with Sacramento in the early 2000s. Was a head coach with Seattle during a period leading up to their most recent championship.

She has been a lead assistant on two championship teams in Seattle with other head coaches.

I got to know her probably 10 or 12 years ago. She came into one of our camps in Dallas. Wanted to come for an entire month to see how we did things, how we put things in, et cetera. Got to know her better there.



It was clear to me, she was still in the W at the time, it was clear to me she was a prospect not only to be an assistant coach in the NBA, but to perhaps one day be an NBA head coach.

So she's done a great job this year with our defensive stuff. Her and Jim Boylen really collaborate on a lot of that stuff. She's a tremendous worker. She is amazing with relationships and with players.

We wouldn't be in the position we're in right now without her contributions. That's certain.

Q. I see a lot of the roots of the success you've had coaching Haliburton to the way you adapted with J Kidd with your championship run there. What similarities do you see in their skills, the system, and how has your approach to coaching offense evolved over the last 15 years or so?

RICK CARLISLE: Yeah, I mean, what I learned my first year in Dallas was to give J-Kidd the ball and get out of the way, let him run the show, let him run the team. That particular season we had had a rough start. That was really a turning point in the season.

Tyrese, very similar situation, but didn't take half a season to figure it out. I mean, I think the situation in Dallas with Luka was the same. It's pretty clear, when you have a player of that kind of magnitude, that kind of presence, that kind of knowledge and vision and depth, you got to let them do what they do.

They're going to have some ups and downs. They're going to make some mistakes. If they're doing it consistent with how they're seeing the game, the lessons learned will be more impactful.

Q. I wanted to ask about another coach on your staff, Lloyd Pierce, how his experience as a head coach has benefited you guys.

RICK CARLISLE: Well, Lloyd is categorically, before you even talk about basketball, he's a natural leader. He's a great leader. When we were in the Bubble, the whole coaching profession mobilized around the George Floyd tragedy, he was selected as our chair for coaches for racial justice, and did amazing things.

He was the one who was a driving force, to get the Atlanta basketball arena, the first certified voting center of all the NBA arenas. By the time the election rolled around that year, more than half of the NBA arenas had been certified.

That's one thing.

Basketball-wise, he has great experience. He understands the game. He played the game. A lot of people don't know, he played with Steve Nash at Santa Clara. He learned about running the floor. Put his hand up, going for lobs, stuff like that. I've heard a lot of stories about that.

I just think he has great knowledge of the game on both sides of the ball. He's really more involved on the offensive side of the ball the last couple years. But he has great wisdom and knowledge of the game.

The thing I like about him for me is that when there's a situation that comes up, he will almost always have a different take on it, which will cause me to pause and rethink. Very fortunate to have him.

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